

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADOPTION EXCELLENCE AWARDS
2006 NOMINATION GUIDELINES**

Thank you for your interest in the Adoption Excellence Awards. To facilitate processing, a complete nomination package must be **received by COB:**

Monday, August 7, 2006

Please send your nomination package to:

Adoption Excellence Awards
USDHHS, Children's Bureau
Portals Building, Room 8148
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Attention: La Chundra Thomas

Selection of the Adoption Excellence Award winners for the year 2006 will be based on the contents of the nomination submission. Please review all of the guidelines and review criteria before preparing your nomination.

Purpose

In the United States, there are currently 518,000 children in foster care. Of those children, 118,000 are free for adoption and awaiting a permanent home. These awards, presented by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), demonstrate the Department's national commitment to expedite rebuilding the lives of those children and achieving permanency for those waiting for adoption.

What Is The Award?

The Adoption Excellence Award is not a monetary award. Award recipients receive an engraved crystal monolith (approximately 9" tall). Engraved on the front of the monolith are the HHS logo, name of award recipient, and the category in which the recipient is honored. Accompanying the monolith award is an official letter, signed by the Secretary of HHS.

Who May Nominate?

Anyone may nominate one or more candidates. Self-nominations are welcomed. Please submit a separate package for each candidate nominated.

Who May Receive These Awards?

The Department will honor those States, agencies, organizations, businesses, individuals and families that have demonstrated excellence in providing stable, permanent homes for our nation's children in foster care. Unless specifically designated in the award category description, nominees may include, but are not limited to:

State agencies	families
local public agencies	courts
businesses	State legislatures
foundations	universities
faith-based organizations	tribal courts and governments
media	advocacy organizations
individuals	community-based organizations
child welfare organizations	

Award Categories

When submitting a nomination package, one of the following award categories must be selected:

1. **Decrease in the Length of Time that Children in Foster Care Wait for Adoption** - recognition of a **State(s) or local public agencies** that have achieved a decrease in the average length of time children stay in foster care.
2. **Increased Adoptions of Older Children** - recognition of a **State(s) or local public agencies** that have significantly increased the number of children over age 8 adopted from the public foster care system.
3. **Interjurisdictional Adoptions** - recognition of a **State(s), local public agencies, and child welfare organizations** that have overcome interjurisdictional barriers to adoption for children in foster care.
4. **Faith-Based Initiatives** - recognition of **faith-based organizations** that have contributed to an increase in the number of adoptions for children in foster care.
5. **Support for Adoptive Families** - recognition of **organizations** that provide significant support to help families adopt and promote the stability of those adoptions through recruitment, preparation, training, post-placement and post-legal adoption services for adoptive families.
6. **Individual and/or Family Contributions** - recognition of the personal contribution of an **individual(s), professional(s) or family(ies)** that promotes the adoption of children in foster care.
7. **Philanthropy** - recognition of works or endeavors that promote adoption for children in foster care, such as financial aid, endowments, gifts, scholarships, or other charitable support.
8. **Business Contributions/Initiatives** – recognition of **businesses** that promote adoption for children in foster care through activities such as partnerships, sponsorships, donations, or volunteerism.

9. **Judicial or Child Welfare System Improvement** - recognition of **court or public child welfare agency** systems change that resulted in fewer children coming into care or expedited the movement of children from foster care.

What Are The Selection Criteria?

Nominations will be reviewed, judged and selected based on ten criteria. Your nomination package must include information on each of the criteria and the impact and outcomes of the nominee's accomplishments. Nominations that demonstrate extraordinary contributions and excellence in promoting and/or increasing permanency will receive the highest consideration. Therefore, it is advised that the nomination clearly address each of the following:

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| o Collaboration/Partnerships | o Use of Resources |
| o Evidence-Based /Measurable Goals | o Sustainability |
| o Innovation/Uniqueness | o Ability to Replicate |
| o Leadership | o Community Involvement |
| o Outreach | o Overall Impact/Contribution of Accomplishments to Permanency |

What Is Included In The Nomination Package?

The nomination package **MUST** include the following:

1. **Nomination Form:** [WORD](#) or [PDF](#) (66 KB) One page of identifying information on the nominator and the nominee. Here, you must also indicate the award category for the nomination.
2. **Nomination Letter (Required):** Not to exceed five double-spaced pages. Letter describes the nominee's accomplishments and services in support of permanency for children in foster care.
3. **Supporting Documentation (Optional):** Letters of support, newspaper articles, etc. Do not send video/audio tapes; they will not be reviewed or returned.

Only letters of support and material submitted in the nomination package will be accepted. Material sent under separate cover will not be considered. Audio and video tapes cannot be reviewed as part of the selection process. **The complete nomination package should not exceed 10 pages.** Any pages that exceed the 10-page limit will not be reviewed.

How Will Award Winners Be Selected?

Awards will be made in the nine categories listed under "Award Categories." Multiple awards may be given in each category. Nominations will be reviewed and awardees recommended by a panel of recognized experts in the adoption field, including members from Federal and State agencies. Recommendations will be submitted to the HHS Secretary for approval. Awards will be distributed and recipients recognized in November during National Adoption Month.

For more information about the awards and past recipients, visit the Children's Bureau website, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/current_initiatives/aeawards.htm or contact **La Chundra Thomas**, at (202) 205-8252 or lachundra.thomas@acf.hhs.gov.